

WIJD - What Is Jesus Doing?

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[0 : 00] You know how when you're missing someone, I'm sure you've all been in a situation where you're missing someone, a loved one, a friend, who's maybe far away, maybe they're in a different country, maybe it's a spouse away on a business trip, and you're really missing having them around.

You know how when you're thinking about them, typically when it's someone you care about, you'll very often find yourself thinking, I wonder what they're doing right now, at this very moment. Have you ever found yourself thinking that about someone you care about, and that's not with you, I wonder what they're doing right now? We generally do. It kind of makes us feel closer to the person who's away when we consider what are they doing right now.

Well, let me ask you a question. Have you ever thought that about Jesus? Have you ever thought, what is he doing right now? You see, a Christian is someone who loves Jesus, and yet right now, Jesus, who we love, is not with us.

He's not here physically in this room with us. He ascended into heaven, and he left us on earth. That's what we're remembering tonight, his ascension. Because he's not with us, though, something I want us to think about tonight is, well, what is he doing then?

[1 : 14] If he's not here with us physically, what is he doing right now? And it's a very important question to ask, because we don't often tend to think about it in our average day-to-day lives.

We don't often tend to think, what is Jesus doing right now? And yet, I think we must. Because if we don't, if we don't think about what Jesus is doing right now, then I think our minds can all too easily get occupied with what's happening on earth, and we forget what's happening in heaven.

Turn with me in your Bibles to Colossians 3, verse 1. It'll be on the screen behind me as well. I just want us to keep that.

I'm going to jump around Scripture, but I want us to keep Colossians 3 open. It says this. I think that should be a key verse for Ascension Day.

Because this is the implication in our lives of what we should be doing given the ascension of Christ. And I just want to spend a few minutes looking at what the Bible tells us Jesus is doing right now, so that we can properly set our hearts and our minds on things above.

[2 : 45] And that is key. As Christians, I can't emphasize enough how important it is to live our lives with our hearts and our minds set on things above, not on earthly things.

And yet, it's so easy, isn't it, to just concentrate and focus on earthly things, setting our hearts and minds on things below. Yet, as Christians, we can't do that.

We can't afford to do that. We must set our hearts and our minds on things above. And so, to help us to do that, let's consider four things that Jesus is doing right now. Firstly, Jesus, the ascended Jesus, is ruling the universe.

Okay, so our verse says, Colossians 3.1, says that he is seated right now at the right hand of God the Father. We see this concept as well in Hebrews 1.3, for example.

It also says, after he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven. And so, Jesus is at the right hand of God. Now, what does that mean?

[3 : 49] Probably, if you've been to church for any length of time, you've probably heard that phrase before. Jesus is at the right hand of God. But what does it mean? Well, to sit at someone's right hand is really to be their executive authority, to carry out their authority.

It's to be a person's right hand man. We use that phrase a lot. And so, when Jesus sits down at the right hand of the Father in heaven, this is a symbolic act that he is taking on the rule of the universe. That God the Father is giving Jesus executive authority over the entire universe. Jesus is being enthroned as the universal king.

We read in Acts 1, which John just read for us, that he was taken up before their very eyes and a cloud hid him from their sight.

So, Jesus literally rose up into the air on a cloud. Now, the language there is very significant, especially when we consider its Old Testament context. I wonder if you've ever wondered why Jesus went to heaven on a cloud.

[4 : 55] It's quite a strange thing. Well, if we turn back, you don't have to turn back. You can read it later. But in the book of Daniel, in the Old Testament, there's this incredible scene, which the prophet Daniel paints for us, of one that he calls like a son of man riding the clouds into God's presence.

And that's where the language is, of the son of man riding the clouds right into the presence of God. And it's a spectacular and terrifying sight. And it goes on to say this from Daniel 7.

He approached the ancient of days. Now, remember, this is written hundreds of years before Jesus. But this is describing, in prophetic form, it's describing what is happening at Jesus' ascension.

So, the disciples just see him rising into heaven on a cloud. They don't see what happens after that, and yet Daniel opens up and tells us what's happening in the throne room of heaven just after the disciples lose sight of Jesus.

So, it's kind of showing us behind the scenes. I love how the Bible does that. Books written hundreds of years before actually show us what's happening behind the scenes of things that happen later.

[6 : 03] Just like the book of Revelation, written 2,000 years ago, and yet it's showing us what's happening behind the scenes of our world today. It's incredible, the Bible, how it draws back the curtains of the spiritual, the holy things.

Anyway, so Daniel is drawing back the curtains of what's happening at Jesus' ascension. And he writes this, Daniel 7. And so, that's what was beginning to happen when Jesus ascended into heaven on a cloud.

It was a cosmic coronation event. You see, while he was on earth, Jesus was limited in many ways. He was one of us. He was a human. Limited. Specifically, he was limited in that he could only be in one place at one time.

But, you see, from heaven, he is now ruling over everyone and everything. There is no limitation.

And that is something that you and I need to remember every single day.

Because, you know what? We look around in our lives and in our world and it looks like everyone else is in control, doesn't it? Politicians control the country. Or try to.

[7 : 25] Banks control our money. Bosses are in control at work. And if you're a boss, then you have a boss over you.

You see, often it seems that we're just at the mercy of other people's control in life. And we have to dance to other people's tunes, doesn't it? But what we've got to remember as Christians is that not one of those people can do anything unless King Jesus says they can.

You see, Jesus is actually in control of every aspect of this world. Every circumstance in your life, every single day, is under the control of Jesus.

Even when it doesn't look like it. I want you to imagine for a second that you're a passenger in a passenger plane. Big plane, right? Which I'm sure you've possibly flown in a plane before.

And so you'll know the scene. You're in the window seat. You're looking out the window. And the plane is flying through a storm. And there's lightning and there's thunder and there's clouds and there's rain.

[8 : 32] And it's coming into land as well. And through the gaps in the clouds as they're rushing past, you see the lights of the city getting bigger and bigger. Now imagine that scene. You look out the window.

It seems very chaotic, doesn't it? If you've been in that position, you know it's quite scary. The plane's shaking because of the turbulence. The rain's coming down. You're looking at everything's rushing past. Now just imagine someone who's never flown before in that situation.

Okay, they would be freaked out looking outside that window. They'd probably scream. If they've never flown before, they didn't know what to expect. They look outside. They probably think they're going to crash. They scream. They'll probably faint.

And the reason, of course, is if it's someone who doesn't know what's going on and they're just put in that situation. The reason is because they don't know that there's actually someone flying the

plane who knows exactly what he's doing.

And so if you're a seasoned flyer, if you've flown a lot, you can relax even when everything looks like chaos out the window. Because you know the pilot's in control and he knows what he's doing. [9 : 32] Well, you see, it's the same with life. We often look around and it looks chaotic, doesn't it? We read the newspapers. It looks like the world is just in absolute chaos.

Chaos. Our life often is just event after event after event and everything's flying around us and it's absolutely chaotic. It seems out of control.

And it tempts us to want to scream and run away. But as a Christian, we can actually sit back and relax. Despite what it looks like, because we know someone's in control. We know who's in control and he knows what he's doing.

Even if it doesn't look like it. Especially when it doesn't look like it. Jesus knows what he's doing. In your life, in my life, in this world. Because right now, Jesus is ruling the universe and everything in it. From heaven. That's the first thing. The second thing is that the ascended Jesus is subduing his enemies. 1 Corinthians 15, 24 says, Then the end will come when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

[10 : 36] For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. Okay, so as Jesus reigns in heaven now, he's not just taking it one day at a time.

You see, Jesus doesn't just come to the beginning of a day and say, oh, what shall we do today? He's got a plan. He's working. And the scripture tells us that right now, in this world, he is working to subdue his enemies.

Daily. One by one, he's taking them down. Acts 2, 33 says, But that phrase, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool at your feet.

That's what's happening. You see, this world is at war. Not just people at war with people, but Jesus himself is on the war path. And everything and everyone that stands against his kingdom will either be brought into willing submission to Jesus like you and I have been.

Or they will be destroyed. Those are the only two options. But nobody who stands against Jesus will get away with it. Nobody.

[12 : 11] And we must remember this. Because sometimes as Christians, we feel that the world is just against us. Don't we? We feel that often, I mean, we might not verbalize it, but we feel like we're fighting a losing battle.

That we're on the losing side as Christians. We're a minority group. You know, if it's not the skeptics mocking our beliefs, then it's the Islamic extremists wanting us dead. We just always seem like we're on the back foot, don't we?

And yet the Bible tells us that despite appearances, we are on the winning side. We must know that. Our victory is guaranteed. Because the king of the universe, who has all authority, is subduing his enemies right now.

And they don't stand a chance. And that's the second thing we know Jesus is doing right now. The third thing is that the ascended Jesus is saving the world. Right now.

You see, just before he left, you'll know what instruction he gave to his disciples. It's recorded for us in Matthew 28. Then Jesus came to them and said, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

[13 : 20] Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit. And teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

Now, we saw just a couple of weeks ago when we looked at that ascension passage in Acts chapter 1. We saw that the reason Jesus didn't take his disciples to heaven with him.

And the reason that he hasn't called down the curtain on this age. The reason we're still in this broken world is because he's not finished his work of saving people yet.

And often, you know, we spoke about it weeks ago. We want Jesus to come back. We want this age of sin and brokenness to be finished. And yet, the only reason it's not is because Jesus hasn't finished saving people, which is excellent news.

Especially for those we know who have not yet found salvation in him. We should be thankful that Jesus hasn't finished his work of saving people.

[14 : 24] He's not finished bringing rebellious sinners back to him. He is still right now building his kingdom all over the world. But he couldn't do that as just a man.

Even as a resurrected man. Because he was limited. Again, he was in one place at one time only. And so, he says to us in Acts 1. You will be my witnesses.

In Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Don't stop until the message has reached everywhere. But I won't leave you alone. I will be there myself by my Holy Spirit to empower you.

You see, the reason Jesus is able to save people all over the world. Is because he has ascended. And is now working through his body, the church on earth.

And so, it's because he ascended. And because he's given us his spirit. That he is continuing to save people in this world. And the only reason that you've ever heard the gospel.

[15 : 30] Is because Jesus had his sights set on saving the world. He sent out a message that would one day reach the southern tip of Africa. And he is still sending out.

Because there are still people everywhere who need to hear that message. And when you become a Christian, you are one of the couriers of that message. That's what you're doing here.

And when you leave here this evening, you go out into the mission field. You know, I heard of this church once that had a sign on the inside of their exit. Saying you are now entering the mission field.

Which is great. Because it's so true, isn't it? But are you ready for that? Are you ready when you leave this place? Are you ready to go into the mission field? Because that's where you're going. Are you ready to play your part in the body of the ascended Christ.

As he saves people on earth. That's what it means to be Christ's body. We are his physical representation here on earth. Because he is ascended in heaven. We are his body and he empowers us.

[16 : 32] Because he has all authority. Are you ready to be part of that body? Doing the work of Jesus on earth. To save people. You know, he may just have his sights set on someone that you will have a conversation with tomorrow.

Or the next day or the next day. He may just reach out to that person through you. You may be the only Christian they know. And Jesus might have his sights set on that person.

Are you ready to be used? Are you ready? I mean, that's an incredible thought, isn't it? That he would honor us so much to use us to reach out to other people and save other people.

We should be so excited. But often we hide away at that thought. And yet we should be thrilled that he would see fit to use us to reach other people.

You see, right now Jesus is busy saving people. And that helps us to know what we're here to do as well. And then fourthly and finally, the ascended Jesus is interceding for his people.

[17 : 37] Listen to the words of Hebrews chapter 9. Again, another description of what happened when Jesus ascended to the throne room of God.

It says this, For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one. He entered heaven itself now to appear for us in God's presence.

Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again the way the high priest enters the most holy place every year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise, Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world.

But he appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. You see, this passage reminds us that Jesus is our eternal high priest.

Unlike the high priest in the Old Testament who could only enter into the Holy of Holies once a year to offer sacrifices for the people. Jesus is always, constantly, continually in the presence of God every second.

[18 : 45] And he's there as our representative. Interceding for us. Representing us. Right now, Jesus is appearing before the Father on your behalf.

Representing you. He's saying to the Father, They're with me. Their sin is covered. Every single second of every single day. Just so that you can come to God. At any time.

Jesus is making that possible right now. Let me tell you some bad news. This week, you're going to sin. Probably before you go to sleep tonight.

Sorry. And I will too. Most likely. And if you're a Christian, you will feel guilty for that. And I will too. But what we must remember.

Is that there's not a single sin. That you or I will ever commit. That is not atoned for by the sacrifice of Jesus. On our behalf. And that there is never a time.

[19 : 47] When we don't have someone in heaven. To represent us. Before the Father. To plead our case. To stand for us. So that we are accepted. Because of his merits. Every second of every day.

For eternity. You know that song. We sometimes sing it. Before the throne of God above. There's a great line. It goes like this. When Satan tempts me to despair. And tells me of the guilt within. Upward I look. And see him there. Who made an end. To all my sin. And he could do that. Because he ascended. And is now standing at the right hand of God.

In our place. To intercede for us. To present us perfect. Before God. And that's why Romans 8. 33 says. Who will bring any charge.

Against those whom God has chosen. It is God who justifies. Who then. Is the one who condemns. No one. Christ Jesus. Who died. More than that.

[20 : 45] Who was raised to life. Is at the right hand of God. And is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us. From the love of Christ. And so we confess our sins. To God.

We do it daily. We do it weekly at church. Not because. We need to do anything. But because. It's to remind ourselves. That he has already done it. All for us. When we confess our sins at church. It's us. Remembering that. They're already covered. And because Jesus. Is in heaven. For you. As your advocate. And high priest. And intercessor.

Nothing. Can ever. Separate you. From the love. Of God. Because right now. In heaven. Jesus. Is interceding. For his people. He's interceding.

For you. If you are in him. And so. This evening. I want to remind you. Whatever's going on. In your life. And whatever lies. Ahead of you.

[21 : 41] Tomorrow. The next day. The next week. The next month. The next year. Remember this. Colossians 3. Since then. You have been raised.

With Christ. Set your hearts. On things above. Where Christ is. Seated at the right hand. Of God. Set your minds. On things above. Not on earthly things.

For you died. And your life. Is now hidden. With Christ. In God. When Christ. Who is your life. Appears. Then you will also. Appear with him.

In glory. Let's pray. Lord Jesus. We. Worship and praise you. As our ascended. King. Our ascended.

Savior. We. Thank you. That we can speak to you now. Because you are alive. But not only are you. You are alive. You are. Seated at the right hand. Of God. And you are working.

[22 : 37] To save people. To subdue your enemies. And to intercede for us. Lord. We thank you so much. That we can be sure. Of these things. And we can be sure.

Of your. Control. Your authority. Your rule. In our lives. And so we pray. That as we go out. Of this place tonight. As we go back. Into our lives. You would help us. To remember these things. Help us to remember. What you are doing. In heaven. Right now. On our behalf. And help us. To get involved. In what you're doing. And help us. To set our minds.

And our hearts. On things above. We pray this. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[23 : 38] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.